

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A configurable I/O bus architecture, comprising:
a system bus interface device;
first and second I/O bus interface devices;
first and second intermediate buses;
a switching device; and
a steering signal; wherein:
the first intermediate bus couples the system bus interface device to the first I/O bus interface device;
the second intermediate bus directly couples the system bus interface device to the switching device; and
the switching device is operable to couple the second intermediate bus either to the first or to the second I/O bus interface device responsive to the steering signal.

2. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 1:
further comprising at least a first signal indicating whether an I/O device is coupled to the second I/O bus interface device; and
wherein the steering signal is derived from the first signal such that the steering signal assumes a first state when the I/O device is so coupled and a second state when the I/O device is not so coupled.

3. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 2, wherein:
the switching device couples the second intermediate bus to the second I/O bus interface device when the steering signal assumes the first state, and couples the second intermediate bus to the first I/O bus interface device when the steering signal assumes the second state.

4. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 2:
further comprising a second signal indicating whether the I/O device is coupled to the second I/O bus interface device; and
wherein the steering signal is derived from both the first and second signals using a logic gate.

5. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 1:
further comprising a hand-operated switch; and
wherein the steering signal is derived from the hand-operated switch such that the steering signal assumes a first state when the hand-operated switch is in a first position, and assumes a second state when the hand-operated switch is in a second position.

6. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 5, wherein:
the switching device couples the second intermediate bus to the second I/O bus interface device when the steering signal assumes the first state, and couples the second intermediate bus to the first I/O bus interface device when the steering signal assumes the second state.

7. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 2:
further comprising a hand-operated switch configured such that, when the hand-operated switch is in a first position, the state of the steering signal is unaffected, but when the switch is in a second position, the steering signal is forced into either its first or its second state.

8. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 4: further comprising a hand-operated switch coupled to the output of the gate and configured such that, when the hand-operated switch is in a first position, the state of the steering signal is unaffected, but when the switch is in a second position, the steering signal is forced into either its first or its second state.
9. (Original) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 1: wherein the first and second intermediate buses are rope buses.
10. (New) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 1, wherein: the switching device is operable to directly couple the second intermediate bus either to the first or to the second I/O bus interface device responsive to the steering signal.
11. (New) A configurable I/O bus architecture, comprising:
 - a system bus interface device;
 - first and second I/O bus interface devices;
 - a switching device arranged to be responsive to a steering signal;
 - a first intermediate bus coupling I/O bandwidth of the first I/O bus interface device with I/O bandwidth of the system bus interface device; and
 - a second intermediate bus coupling I/O bandwidth of the switching device with I/O bandwidth of the system bus interface device; wherein:
 - the switching device is arranged to couple I/O bandwidth of the second intermediate bus to I/O bandwidth of either the first or second I/O bus interface device responsive to the steering signal.

12. (New) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 11:
further comprising a first signal indicating whether an I/O device is coupled to the
second I/O bus interface device; and
wherein the steering signal, in response to at least the first signal, indicates the I/O
device coupled to the second I/O bus interface device and the I/O device not
coupled to the second I/O bus interface device.

13. (New) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 12, wherein:
the switching device couples the I/O bandwidth of the second intermediate bus to I/O
bandwidth of the second I/O bus interface device in response to the steering
signal indicating the I/O device coupled to the second I/O bus interface device
and couples the I/O bandwidth of the second intermediate bus to I/O bandwidth
of the first I/O bus interface device in response to the steering signal indicating
the I/O device coupled to the first I/O bus interface device.

14. (New) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 12:
further comprising a second signal indicating whether an I/O device is coupled to the
second I/O bus interface device; and
wherein the steering signal, in response to at least the first signal and the second signal,
indicates the I/O device coupled to the second I/O bus interface device and the
I/O device not coupled to the second I/O bus interface device.

15. (New) The configurable I/O bus architecture of claim 11:
further comprising a hand-operated switch arranged to generate the steering signal,
wherein the hand-operated switch in a first position generates the steering signal
in a first state and the hand-operated switch in a second position generates the
steering signal in a second state.

16. (New) An I/O bus architecture comprising:
at least one first I/O bus interface device;
at least one second I/O bus interface device;
a switching device connected to the at least one first I/O bus interface device and the at least one second I/O bus interface device; and
a system bus interface device connected to the at least one first I/O bus interface device and the switching device;
wherein the switching device is arranged to connect the system bus interface device to one of the at least one first I/O bus interface device and the at least one second I/O bus interface device responsive to a steering signal.

17. (New) The I/O bus architecture of claim 16, wherein:
further comprising a first signal indicating whether an I/O device is coupled to the at least one second I/O bus interface device; and
wherein the steering signal, in response to at least the first signal, indicates the I/O device coupled to the at least one second I/O bus interface device and the I/O device not coupled to the at least one second I/O bus interface device.

18. (New) The I/O bus architecture of claim 17, wherein:
the switching device connects the at least one second I/O bus interface device to the system bus interface device in response to the steering signal indicating the I/O device coupled to the second I/O bus interface device and couples the at least one first I/O bus interface device to the system bus interface device in response to the steering signal indicating the I/O device coupled to the first I/O bus interface device.